DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 053 427 24 CG 006 592

AUTHOR	Rimel, Evelyn G.
TITLE	The Development of a Series of Video Taped Counseling Sessions. Final Report. CORD Project.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin State Universities Consortium of Research Development, Stevens Point.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. Bureau of Research.
BUREAU NO	BR-6-2728-37
PUB DATE	Dec 69
GRANT	OEG-3-6-062728-2129
NOTE	20p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Counseling, *Counseling Effectiveness, Counselor Acceptance, Counselor Performance, Counselors, *Counselor Training, Listening, *Listening Skills, *Practicums, Professional Education, *Video Tape Recordings

ABSTRACT

The rationale, methods, problems and results of developing a library of video-taped counseling sessions are described. The tapes are intended to capture the counselor-counselee interactive process, so that counselor trainees might see and hear what had taken place rather than be dependent on what they thought had taken place. Such tapes would provide training facilitators for small groups of counselor trainees mutually engaged in developing awareness of relationship building, which must be accomplished before suggestions, information, advice-giving or collaborative planning is acceptable to the counselee. Nine tapes, currently available, are very briefly described. It is concluded that (1) video-taping and feedback provide the most effective counselor training in listening; and (2) Wisconsin State University-Stout is badly in need of better tape reproduction processes in order to further develop an adequate training tape library. (TL)

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ED053427

The Wisconsin State Universities Consortium of Research Development

Research Report

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SERIES OF VIDEO TAPED COUNSELING SESSIONS

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Cooperative Research

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and the
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FINAL REPORT

CORD Project

Project No. 760-541-70-1007-06
Grant No. 3-6-062728-2129
Local Project No. 37

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SERIES OF VIDEO TAPED COUNSELING SESSIONS

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December, 1969

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The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a Wisconsin CORD grant with the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement in the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The purpose was to develop a series of video taped counseling sessions utilizing combined verbal and nonverbal procedures so as to more realistically capture the interactive process which takes place between a counselor and a counselee, so that the counselor trainee may see and hear what had taken place rather than be dependent on what he thought took place. These video recorded counseling sessions would provide training facilitators for small groups of counselor trainees mutually engaged in developing awareness of relationship building, which must be accomplished before suggestions, information, advice giving or collaborative planning may be acceptable to the counselee.

Since there has always been much lack of continuity between personal expressions of concern, a series of unrelated different concerns may hold together the key to the real underlying problem or problems. These concerns must be observed, listened to, given feedback and felt in learning how "to be a counselor." As the counselor trainee increases sensitivity to a wide variety of human feelings, both his own and others, he grows more capable in helping the moment-by-moment relationship which unfolds where each gesture, inflection, silence may be significant.

For ten years, counselor education at Stout State University had offered a supervised counseling practicum where audio-tapes, "fishbowl" observations of counseling sessions, and feedback were used. About two

years ago, two videotapes, borrowed videocorder and camera provided immediate playback and critiquing; but there was no way to provide a common core series of video taped developmental experiences for training several small groups of counselors enrolled in practicum. It seemed desirable to develop a common core exposure to varying skills, "attending behavior," reflection of feeling and summarization of feeling.

Purpose of the Study

The principle concern was to develop a library of video recorded counseling sessions, which would provide more continuity in helping beginning counselors define their own role. These video recorded sessions, which were scaled-down counseling sessions lasting ten to thirty minutes, focused on specific kinds of counseling behavior. They would provide: (1) a bridge between classroom theory and intern involvement, (2) dynamic situations where counselors saw how counselees felt reinforced in the counseling relationship, and (3) relaxation help to the neophyte counselor through observation of "attending behavior," which may be personally felt and implemented.

Development Status

During the spring semester 1968-69, four hundred eighty video taped twenty-minute counseling sessions were recorded, critiqued, and tabulated. Those sessions which seemed most demonstrative of specific counseling behavior were recorded in a card file system and the video taped sessions saved for re-recording on both one-inch and half-inch video tapes. One hundred one-half hour video taped final practicum sessions were critiqued, tabulated and saved whenever the video tape session significantly reflected symbolic behavior patterns in counseling.

Although eighteen one-half inch video tapes and two one-inch video tapes were purchased at the beginning of the project, there was not a sufficient number to adequately preserve demonstrative sessions for re-recording.

It was originally anticipated that the re-recordings could be done at Stout State University. The poor quality of reproductions necessitated future re-recordings made elsewhere which added complications when there was only a limited number of video tapes available.

During the summer session of 1969, the completed demonstrative video tapes were class tested in the supervised counseling practicum.

With no perfected control over the number of class groups which may tune in on the closed circuit TV showings of the one-inch video tapes, the production of one-inch video tapes has been discontinued. The quality of reproduction also being so inadequate, this was no sacrifice.

A series of nine demonstrative one-half inch video taped counseling sessions have been made, given trial experiences and now held as an available library of training video tapes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teaching beginning counselors "HOW to counsel" has been one of the more complex and challenging issues facing counselor education. Since counselors are not technicians, but communication artists, how can they most effectively be helped to relax and become skilled in their "attending behavior," reflection of feeling and summarization of feeling, and in their ability to carry on collaborative planning with another.

Attending behavior seems central to counseling skill and involves both verbal and nonverbal means of communication. It involves listening, understanding symbolic behavior, and reflecting "meaning behind the words" so that the counselee may be helped to know himself better, to plan with another, and try out, talk through and modify plans to fit more adequately into the world of reality. Such counseling communication does not exist merely by passing words back and forth in a face-to-face situation between two people. The counseling relationship is concerned with the counselee as he is and as he may be. It is a dynamic, interactive process requiring much understanding of social-psychological dynamics by the counselors.

Therefore, every counselor must learn how to help another build up his feeling of self-worth, provide comfortableness to another so that he may feel free to expose his areas of concern and need for help, reveal acceptance of the other as he is, and become actively involved with another in overcoming his hindrance to adequate functioning. Success will depend on how the counselee perceives the interactive process which results from

the counselees' learned prior perceptual sets and the feelings which the counselor communicates. Somehow each counselor must develop "how to communicate," largely nonverbally, warmth, acceptance, respect, genuineness, and mutuality. Only video tapes can adequately capture these nonverbal forms of communication. The nonverbal communication behavior of the counselor constitutes the most genuine feedback the counselee receives.

Beck, Kantor, and Gelinau in 1963; Rose in 1966; Rioch, Elkes, Flint, Udensky, Newman, and Silber in 1963--all have reported the use of microcounseling in training lay counselors. Truax and Cerkhuff in 1967 indicated that graduate trainees in clinical psychology were brought to function at levels of effective therapy commensurate to more experienced therapists in less than one hundred hours of training. Kagan, Krathwohl, and Farquhar in 1965, through an interpersonal process, recall demonstrated the value of video tapes as an aid in the understanding of counseling.

Attending Behavior

In 1967, Kennedy and Thompson in one study and Krumboltz, Varenhorst, and Thoresen in another, demonstrated that the communication of attentiveness was a potent reinforcer in counselor-client interaction and also played an important role in the establishment of the relationship. They defined "attending behavior" as the controlling dynamic in the interaction between counselor and counselee. Three central aspects of "attending behavior" were identified, which included both nonverbal and verbal components. The first of these is eye contact in which the counselor simply looks at the client. Secondly, postural position, movements, and gestures communicate attentiveness. Verbal-following behavior represents the counselor's responding to the meaning behind the words used without introducing new data. Too many trainees find it difficult in their early interviews to look at their clients

and they keep trying to think of "what should I say next" instead of simply attending to the counselee and losing themselves in the moment-by-moment relationship which emerges. It seems a truism that we tend to favor those who pay attention to us.

Skinner (1953) considered attention a generalized reinforcer. He pointed out:

> The attention of people is reinforcing because it is a necessary condition for other reinforcements from them. In general, only people who are attending to us reinforce our behavior. The attention of someone who is particularly likely to supply reinforcement--a parent, a teacher, or a loved one--is an especially good generalized reinforcer and sets up especially strong attention-getting behavior.

The training process used by Krumboltz and associates included the use of video-taped models, training experiences, and regular feedback.

Reflection of Feeling

Beginning counselors must learn how to radiate empathetic understanding and communicate non-possessive warmth and humanness. The key aspect of any effective interpersonal relationship is the ability to transmit "I am with you. . . I accurately sense the world as you are feeling and perceiving it."

The more complex skill of reflection of feeling represents a focused attending in which the counselor selectively attends to one certain aspect or aspects of the interactive process. The skill to select the meaningful from the counselee's feeling vantage requires considerable practice through cue discrimination and feedback.

Normington and associates found that client ratings of counselor effectiveness and counselor ability to establish and maintain meaningful relationships increased significantly with each use of video models, practice sessions, and regular feedback. The trend analysis revealed that the counselor trainees significantly improved in their ability to reflect

feeling in a positive linear fashion. It seemed that the accurate reflection of feeling was an identifiable skill which could be taught to beginning counselors effectively via the micro-counseling paradigm. The trainees were highly enthusiastic about the changes they had observed in themselves and expressed considerably more faith in themselves as counselors.

Summarization of Feeling

This skill involves attending to the counselee, accurately sensing the feelings which are being expressed both verbally and nonverbally, and integrating meaningfully the total symbolic behavior revealed by the person. This requires the skill to bring together seemingly diverse elements into a meaningful pattern so that the counselee can be helped to understand, accept, and respect his own ideas and feelings. Normington and Miller found that the use of video models, practice trials, and consistent feedback facilitated counselor trainees to significantly improve their summarization of feeling in a positive linear fashion. The ratings of the increase in accurate summarization of feeling by external judges resulted in a .001 level of significance for the trials and for linearity. The counselor trainees' ratings of their own ability to accurately summarize feeling, and their self-concept ratings improved significantly. Since counselor confidence is an important variable in counseling success, the direct viewing of video tapes and critiquing of their own video tapes provides dramatic and convincing evidence of the micro-counseling procedure.

In order to engage in "attending behavior" of following the counselee's expressions of concerns by relevant statements, the counselor must be able to listen effectively. To follow communication of feeling by appropriate changes in voice timbre and quality and by appropriate reflections, the counselor must learn to attend fully to the feeling that is being transmitted

rather than to the words that are being spoken. Too often a person responds to another as a projection of his own theoretical framework. To be an objective counselor requires considerable micro-counseling practice, critiquing, and positive reinforcement of "losing one's own bias" and listening completely to what another really means.

Soper and Combs have written:

> Good counselors are more likely to perceive from an internal rather than an external frame of reference; in terms of humanness rather than things; to perceive others as able and worthy; to perceive themselves as identified with people; and to perceive their functioning as feeling with others.

In order to help counselor trainees learn how to be counselors, research to date seems to have substantiated the effectiveness of video models, video practice trials, micro-counseling, and regular feedback.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Four hundred twenty-minute video taped practice counseling sessions made during regular micro-counseling in the course Supervised Counseling Practicum and one hundred half-hour video taped final exam sessions from the same course were critiques, selected, and catalogued. Unique examples of "attending behavior," nonattending behavior, reflection and summarization of feeling were sorted out.

Production of One-Inch Video Tapes

The first attempts to re-record selected examples from half-inch video tapes onto one-inch video tapes were miserable failures. After consultation with specialists in Minneapolis, two one-inch video tapes of mediocre quality were reproduced. When reviewed by a selected committee of department members, it seemed best to discontinue the production of any more one-inch tapes until Stout gets the equipment to make better productions.

Problems Making One-Half Inch Video Tapes

The local attempts to re-record selected passages onto half-inch video tapes in order to make specialized tapes of counseling behavior were not too successful either. The present video tapes have been reproduced at La Crosse. Enough passages have been selected for re-recording to make four more one-half inch video tapes, but two planned trips to La Crosse for such re-recording have not materialized.

Nine Tapes Available

Out of the twenty-three currently owned one-half inch video tapes, nine tapes constitute an available library of scaled examples portraying a variety of symbolic behavior patterns. There are two tapes carrying examples of nonattending behavior and two tapes carrying examples of "attending behavior."

Four thirty-three minute video-tape samples of counseling: (1) with Dan and his need to grow self-confidence; (2) future planning session with a gifted student working on his place in the world of work; (3) the cry of an anguished male sophomore trying to discover "Who am I;" and (4) the inner struggles of a graduate student trying "to be" a counselor--reveal reflection and summarization of feeling.

One video tape carries an example of three counselors in different training groups carrying on a get-acquainted session with the same veteran-counselee. These quite different sessions demonstrate the true uniqueness of the interpersonal relationship which develops between a counselor and a counselee, and also illustrates the extent to which beginning counselors tend to project their own feelings and philosophy of living and thereby color the ongoing moment-by-moment interaction, both verbally and non-verbally transmitted.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the last five years, research has generally confirmed the fact that no two people have reacted alike to given situations, and no one person reacts alike to several different situations. Even routine get-acquainted interviews carried on by different counselors produced varying responses and sometimes quite opposite reactions have been elicited from the same person.

It has been found that the trained observer more effectively decoded nonverbal behavior. The free expression of an outward sign of an emotion has been found to intensify that emotion. Emotional feelings have been found to decrease with the repression of an outward sign. The counselee often measured the feeling of comfortableness and acceptance existing between himself and the counselor just by observing the counselor's face.

Counselor trainees generally have found that video taped counseling sessions have been effective in helping them learn "how to be" with their counselees. In everyday living, persons have not been too observant of bodily movements, facial gestures and other nonverbal means of self-expression. Regular video taping and feedback have helped counselors in training to grow awareness of and learn how to interpret and reflect more accurately the total pattern of symbolic behavior being expressed by counselees. Often counselees have been found to use more nonverbal forms of communication when they have difficulty expressing their feelings. The common parent-child doctrine, "children are to be seen and not heard" seems to have bottled up many adolescents.

Counselor trainees must learn how to read the meaning behind the total pattern of symbolic behavior and be able to communicate the warmth and acceptance needed to wear away the block which interferes with adequate life adjustment. All this requires the development of LISTENING ability to what another has said, done and felt. This ability does not usually spring into being; it must be developed. Video taping and feedback seems to have provided the most effective training process.

The production of a library of video taped counseling sessions so as to have a common core of situational facilitators for many small groups of counselors in practicum to experience, share and interact with each other concerning symbolic patterns of counselee behavior seems a MUST. But this MUST cannot be achieved until certain reproduction processes at Stout State University have been much improved upon.

It seems highly advisable that: (1) the Supervised Counseling Practicum maintain a minimum of two half-inch video tapes per enrollee so that one tape may be available for continued practice while the other tape is being critiqued, catalogued, selections made of significant scaled-down counseling sessions and re-recorded, (2) the Supervised Counseling Practicum maintain its own videocorder and camera so that many more unique counseling situations may be recorded and feedback made available more often to all trainees, (3) the Stout State University TV Center acquires the requisite facilities for the regular, consistent, and effective reproduction of one-half inch video taped counseling sessions of more than average quality, (4) the Stout State University closed circuit TV system develop adequate control over who tunes in and out so that the playback of personal counseling relationships can be played back only to Supervised Counseling Practicum students, who are aware of, understand, and can effectively utilize the scaled-down

counseling situations, and (5) when control over the playback of one-inch video tapes has been effectuated, the reproduction of quality one-inch video taped counseling sessions be resumed.

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